

North Carolina State Parks System Master Planning Process

Frequently Asked Questions

What goes into a master plan and why is it important?

The creator of a master plan must consider what land is available and factors such as ecologically sensitive areas, buffers, natural features that draw visitors and necessary infrastructure such as roads, utilities, entrances and maintenance areas. A master plan determines what types of recreation will be encouraged and where visitor amenities will be located. All this must be balanced against the mission of protecting natural resources. For the most part, the state parks system manages land that has had little or no prior development, and creating a park involves making decisions that are not easily reversed. Also, there must be a focus on sustainable design principles.

Will the public have a chance to participate?

The public in general, as well as the park's neighbors, local governments and other agencies are encouraged to participate. Landowners surrounding the park are specifically invited and some are contacted individually. A public meeting is scheduled for people to view conceptual plans and talk to designers, and written public comment is welcome. Visit the state parks system's Web site to review maps of the conceptual plans (from www.ncparks.gov, navigate to Haw River State Park's home page). Written comments may be submitted through Nov. 4 online through the Web (to dpr.masterplancomments@ncdenr.gov) or mailed to: Haw River State Park Master Planning, N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation, 1615 MSC, Raleigh, NC, 27699.

If the master plan calls for new facilities, when and how will they be built?

Any proposed capital project in the state parks system is individually scored and assigned priority along with all others throughout the state as part of the division's Project Evaluation Program. The priorities are continuously evaluated. This would be the case for any new infrastructure (roads, utilities, etc.), facilities or trails at Haw River State Park. The time frame for building new facilities will depend on how each new project is evaluated in relation to others in the state.

Funding for park development comes from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, created in 1994 and supported by a portion of the state's tax on real estate deed transfers. The Parks and Recreation Authority, an appointed body, allocates money for capital projects after considering recommendations from the state parks system staff.

Will additional property be needed to complete the master plan?

The master plan may well include options dependent on additional property. And, every state park master plan identifies parcels that are desirable acquisitions. In most cases, the parcels are contiguous to park boundaries and their acquisition would help protect the park's natural resources, aid in park operations and/or provide needed room to develop facilities and provide buffers.

If additional property is acquired, how will that be done?

The state parks system works with willing sellers and coordinates with the State Property Office for independent appraisals and negotiations. Each transaction with a landowner is unique, and on a case-by-case basis the desirability of the property, its intended use and the situation of the landowner are evaluated. Any funding for land acquisition most likely would come from the Parks and Recreation, Natural Heritage or Clean Water Management trust funds or from a combination of those funding sources